

# **BICYCLE/IN-LINE SKATING/SKATEBOARDING SAFETY**

## **Buying the right bicycle**

It is important that the bicycle your child rides is the right size. In addition, consider the following recommendations:

- The bicycle should not be too big or complicated.
- Your child should be able to place the balls of his/her feet on the ground when sitting on the seat.
- The bicycle should have a bell or horn.

## **Buying the right helmet**

Although helmets can cost between \$13 and \$50, they can save money by possibly preventing a visit to your child's physician or the emergency room. When shopping for a helmet, take your child with you - a child will be more likely to wear a helmet if he/she picks it out. Helmets should meet the following requirements:

- The helmet should be approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Approved helmets meet stringent safety standards.
- Your child should like his/her helmet (bright-colored helmets with stickers are very popular). This will increase the likelihood that he/she will wear it consistently
- The helmet should fit your child's head so that when the straps are snug, the helmet does not move around on the head.

Some helmets are multi-sport, which can be used for inline-skating, skateboarding, bicycling, or other wheel sports. Helmets that specifically are called "bicycle helmets" are designed only for that sport. Helmets come in many sizes and varieties, including many infant sizes.

## **Proper helmet wear**

Helmets come with sponge pads to adjust the fit on your child's head. A properly-fitted helmet should meet the following requirements:

- The helmet should fit snug, not moving on the head.
- The front edge of the helmet should be two finger widths above the eyebrows.
- Front and back straps of the helmet should form a V just below the ear.
- Front straps should be vertical and the rear straps should be flat.
- The chinstrap should be snug when your child opens his/her mouth (one finger should fit between the chin and chin strap when the mouth is closed).

## Road rules

Since most bicycle crashes occur because the child breaks a traffic rule, it is important to teach your child the traffic and road rules. Besides wearing a bicycle helmet, teach your child the following traffic and road rules:

- Stop before riding into traffic from a driveway, sidewalk, parking lot, or other street.
- Look left, right, and left again to check for cars.
- If the road is clear, enter.
- Ride on the far right of the road, with traffic.
- Ride so cars can see you, wearing brightly colored clothes, especially at night.
- Obey all traffic signals and stop signs.
- Look back and yield to traffic coming from behind before turning left.
- Ride bicycles in single file.
- Look for uneven pavement or other surface problems.

Special Note: Try to avoid letting your child ride his/her bicycle, in-line skates, or skateboard during non-daylight hours or during bad weather. If your child does ride at night, make sure his/her bicycle has a headlight, flashing taillight, and reflectors.

## In-line skates

Even experienced in-line skaters can crash and sustain injuries. The following recommendations were derived from the National Safety Council and the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC):

- Always wear protective gear, such as elbow and kneepads, gloves, helmets, and wrist guards.
- Buy durable skates with proper ankle support.
- Always warm up your muscles before skating by skating slowly for five minutes or more.
- Skate with knees slightly bent to maintain balance.
- Practice stopping, which is done by bringing the foot with the heel stop forward until the heel stop is level with the toes of the other foot, bend the front knee, and lift the front foot's toes.
- Always skate on the right side of sidewalks and other paths.
- Pass on the left and warn others that you are passing.
- Avoid skating in the street, especially where there is a lot of traffic.
- Look for uneven pavement or other surface problems.
- Check your skates regularly for wear and tear. Make sure the wheels are tightened.

## Skateboards

Skateboards should never be used on surface streets. Even experienced skateboarders can fall, so learning how to fall safely can help reduce the risk of severe injuries. The following are recommendations from the National Safety Council about how to fall correctly:

- When losing your balance, crouch down on the skateboard so your fall is short.
- Try to land on fleshy parts of your body when falling.
- Try to roll as you fall, which prevents your arms from absorbing all the force.
- Try to relax, rather than remaining stiff when falling.

When riding a skateboard, children should obey all traffic rules. Other safety precautions to take when skateboarding include the following:

- Wear protective gear such as helmets, padding, and closed-toe and slip-resistant shoes.
- Check the skateboard for wear and tear.
- Only allow one person per skateboard.
- Do not hitch rides from bicycles, cars, or other vehicles.

- Carefully practice tricks in designated skateboarding areas.